

Chairman Casey and committee members:

My name is Sandra Darling and I am writing to you in **support** (with suggestions) of HB 7378. Homestead Exemption is a method of fair and equitable taxation for residents of States and communities. This bill will make it easier and more efficient for the towns and cities of RI to enact a Homestead Exemption policy which will enable more residents and seniors to remain in their homes. This bill is unfortunately not a mandate for enacting such legislation but may offer a window of opportunity at the local level to provide tax relief to their citizens. However, with the abundance of owners who rent property in our neighborhoods I ask you to consider adding an amendment which would **stipulate owner occupancy only!** We do not want to give tax relief to owners who rent out their property.

I hope for future legislation that would mandate Homestead Exemption for the entire State. However, I ask that you pass this bill with an amendment to protect the tax base of towns and cities while offering potential tax relief for RI citizens.

Sandra Darling, Retired Nurse and AARP Volunteer

Bristol, RI

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